Terns

Terns (*Sternidae* sp.) are small seabirds that are commonly seen along coastlines and estuaries of the North Sea and Wadden Sea, especially during the summer months (Cabot & Nisbet, 2013). This study identified 5 species of Terns that inhabit both the North Sea and the Wadden Sea, which are: Sandwich tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*), Arctic tern (*Sterna paradisaea*), Little tern (*Sternula albifrons*), Common tern (*Sterna Hirundo*), and Black tern (*Chlidonias niger*) (Cabot & Nisbet, 2013; Vogelbescherming, n.d.).

History/ Population trends

The breeding population of terns on the German North Sea coast has undergone substantial fluctuations over the last 100 years (Garthe & Flore, 2007; Thompson et al., 1993). The numbers of breeding birds fluctuated quite strongly in the first 30 years of the 20th century (Garthe & Flore, 2007; Thompson et al., 1993). After these years of fluctuation, a relatively steady decrease occurred (Garthe & Flore, 2007; Thompson et al., 1993). The least amount of breeding Sandwich terns was reached in 1965, with 2.243 pairs (Garthe & Flore, 2007). Around 1970, this numbers increased significantly, up to the mid-1990s and reached a maximum with 10.138 pairs in 1996 (Garthe & Flore, 2007). More recently, the numbers have dropped to only 5.681 pairs in 2005, which is the lowest number over the last 30 years (Garthe & Flore, 2007). Clark and Frid surmise that a likely cause for these more recent decreases in all terns is the decline in small pelagic fish populations (2001).

Miscellaneous

- Unlike almost all other species of terns, Black terns are mostly found in swampy areas or agricultural areas (Vogelbescherming, n.d.). Black terns are almost never seen on open sea, but are known to prefer more coastal and inland water, such as the Wadden Sea and its surrounding inland areas (Vogelbescherming n.d.).

Diet

- Sandeel (Vogelbescherming, n.d.)
- Sprat (Vogelbescherming, n.d.)
- Herring (Vogelbescherming, n.d.)
- Crustaceans (Vogelbescherming, n.d.)
- Other detritivores (Vogelbescherming, n.d.)
- Annelida (Vogelbescherming, n.d.)

Sources

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